

LESSON 2

BIRTH AND EARLY CHILDHOOD

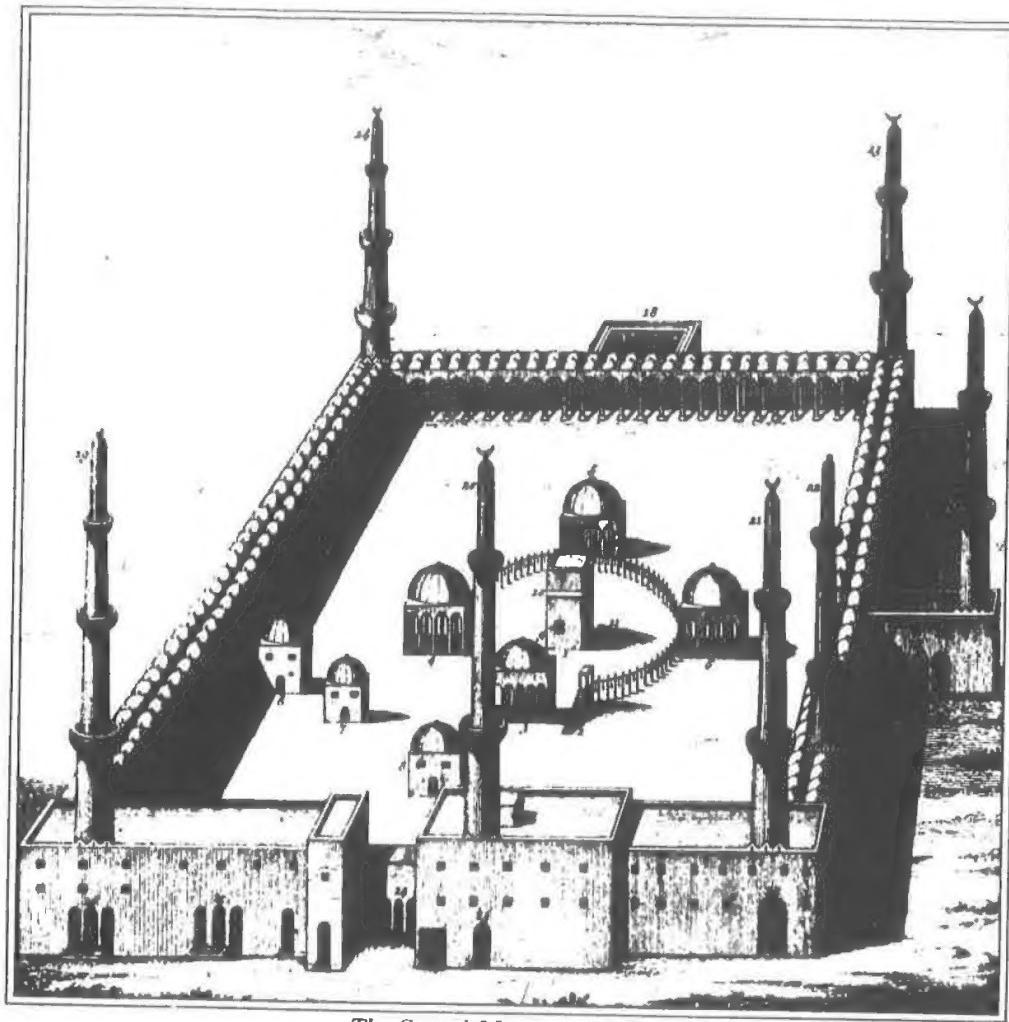
Rasulullah (S) belonged to the tribe of Quraish and family of Banu Hashim. His father's name was Abdullah. His mother's name was Aminah. Abdullah and Aminah had a very happy life.

Aminah became pregnant. Most women are happy when they get pregnant, but Aminah had more reason to be happy. She had a dream. In the dream, someone told her, "You will have a son. He will be the leader of mankind. You should name him Muhammad." She was delighted. While she was pregnant she felt happy and healthy all the time.

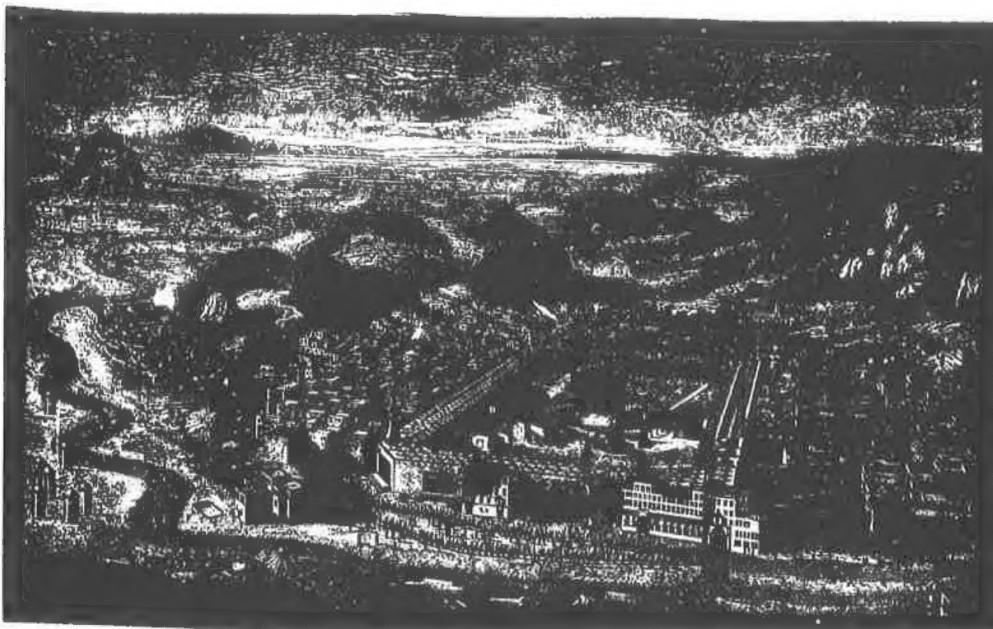
Aminah's husband, Abdullah, died suddenly while visiting Yathrib. Aminah was sad and concerned about her unborn son. "Who will raise him? Who will teach him? Who will care for him?" She asked herself. Aminah's father-in-law, Abd al-Muttalib, was very old. Abdullah's brother was Abu Talib, who had a large family and was, himself, poor. The future of her child made Aminah sad and worried. Although such ideas came to Aminah's mind, she was told in her dreams about the great blessing that her son would be. These good tidings gave her strength and pleased her.

[Many other signs were noted which told of a great event to come. One such famous event was the failure of a big attack on Makkah by the powerful Abyssinian ruler, Abraha. He came with a mighty army of elephants to destroy Kabah. The Makkans were weak and helpless. They left the care of Kabah in the hands of Allah. Allah sent small birds carrying little stones in their claws. The birds pelted Abraha's army with the little stones, killing his elephants and making his army flee. Many people felt that if Allah had saved his Kabah from destruction he must have some plan for it in the future.]

[When Muhammad (S) was born, fourteen towers of the palace of the Khusraw of Iran fell down. The great fire which had been burning for one thousand years in the Zoroastrian temple of Iran was extinguished. Through these signs Allah foretold that His prophet would bring the power of mighty rulers down; that Allah's worship would replace the worship of fire and other such objects.]



The Sacred Mosque (Niebuhr)



Two views of Masjid-al-Haram in Makkah

Among the Makkans, it was a custom to give their children to foster parents who came from desert villages. These mothers took the children with them and kept them in the clean and open climate of the village. The villagers also spoke good Arabic. Makkans wanted their children to learn to speak well. When they grew up they might become great poets, story tellers, and speakers.

At that time, many women from the tribe of Banu Sa'd came to take children from the Makkans families. They went to the rich families and got all the children of the Quraish. Nobody wanted Muhammad (S), the orphan child of Abdullah.

There was a poor lady, Halimah, who was late to arrive. Her camel was thin and slow. Her donkey was weak and exhausted. She herself was so weak that she did not have enough milk even for her own infant son.

She could find no other child to take with her so she went to Aminah and Abd al-Muttalib for baby Muhammad (S). Aminah gladly gave her son, Muhammad (S), to Halimah. Halimah did not know that this baby was chosen by Allah to be a blessing for all mankind. Soon he would fill Halimah's own life with blessings.

As Halimah and her husband departed for home, she saw the blessings all around her. Her camel gave lots of milk, enough for her whole family. Her camel and her donkey now ran so fast that all the others were left behind. Other women of Banu Sa'd called to her, "Halimah, wait for us," but her donkey would not stop. Halimah herself now had lots of milk, enough for her son and for baby Muhammad (S).

Halimah's village had been suffering from drought for a long time. There was no pasture for the goats and camels. There were no crops for the people. As soon as baby Muhammad (S) came to the village, it rained, and the drought was soon over. All the goats and camels became healthy. The villagers had a good crop.

The whole village came to know that the new baby had brought them luck and blessings. All of them loved Muhammad (S). His foster mother, Halimah, loved him like her own children. She knew Muhammad (S) was not an ordinary baby. Halimah and her husband would have liked to keep Muhammad (S) with them permanently, but when Muhammad (S) was two years

old they took him back to his mother, Aminah, and his grandfather, Abd al-Muttalib.

Halimah wanted to keep Muhammad (S) for a longer time. She convinced Aminah and Abd al-Muttalib to let her keep baby Muhammad (S) for some more time. Aminah wanted the baby to be returned to her but because of her concern for baby Muhammad's health she allowed Halimah to take him with her.

Muhammad (S) played with his foster brothers and sisters. He went with them to the desert to shepherd their goats. One day, Muhammad (S) and his foster brothers saw two men in white clothes coming toward them. These were, in fact, angels of Allah. They went straight to Muhammad (S), opened his chest, took his heart out, cleaned it, filled it with Nur, the divine light, and put it back.

All the children were scared. They ran home and told their parents. The parents rushed back to Muhammad (S) to see if he was all right. They saw baby Muhammad (S) sitting there. He was also a little frightened. He was still looking up to the heavens watching the angels depart. He told them about his experience.

Muhammad's foster parents did not know what all this meant. They took Muhammad (S) to an astrologer. When the astrologer looked at Muhammad (S) he knew that Muhammad (S) was going to be a great man. He also saw that he would break the idols and abolish idol worship. He started screaming, "Kill Muhammad now before he grows up and brings our religion down."

This screaming scared the foster parents. They went home worried about Muhammad's safety. Halimah was so scared by these incidents that she took Muhammad(S) back to his mother and grandfather. Muhammad(S) had lived for about four years with his foster parents and foster brothers and sisters.

When Prophet Muhammad (S) grew old he always remembered his foster parents kindly. His foster family remembered his childhood fondly. Halimah's family always talked about the blessings and pleasures which baby Muhammad (S) had brought to them. Later, when Prophet Muhammad (S) started preaching Islam, all of his foster family became Muslims. They had seen the blessings of the baby Muhammad(S). They were ready to receive the blessings of Muhammad, Rasulullah (S).

Rasulullah (S) always remembered Halimah with love and called her with affection, "my mother."

Points of review:

1. Before the birth of Muhammad (S), many signs foretold a big event.
2. Muhammad (S) lived with the family of Halimah in Banu Sa'd for four years.
3. The family of Halimah and the village of Banu Sa'd experienced many blessings with the coming of Muhammad (S)

Words to remember:

Astrologer, extinguish, Nur, pelt.

Important names

Abd al-Muttalib, 'Abdullah, Abu Talib, Aminah, Banu Hashim, Banu Sa'd, Halimah.

Quranic Study:

1. The Quraish, being the custodians of (*Bait Allah*) Ka'bah, enjoyed respect, peace and security in Arabia. Read *Surah Quraish*, 106 and see how Allah wanted the Quraish to respond to the favors of Allah.
2. Read the story of Isma'il's sacrifice, *al-Saffat*, 37:99-111. Ibrahim (A) and the building of Ka'bah, *al-Baqarah*, 2:124-128; *Ali Imran* 3:96-97.
3. Prophet Ibrahim (A) prayed to Allah for the birth of Muhammad (S). *al-Baqarah* 2:129 and Allah heard the prayers of Ibrahim and sent Muhammad (S) as His last prophet, (*al-Baqarah* 2:151).

How do these two verses describe the mission of Rasulullah ?